



Best Countries to Live in

Findings from BCG's 2013 global consumer sentiment survey (US-focused results)

September 2013

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP



Summary of key U.S. findings

Key themes

Nonresident consumers in 10 countries rank the U.S. as a top place to live, behind Australia and Canada

Nonresidents and residents have very different reasons for choosing the U.S. as a top place to live

The U.S. is the most popular place to live among residents of Brazil and India

U.S. Millennials show a much stronger interest in living in EU countries and Japan than older generations of Americans

Supporting detail

- BCG's Center for Consumer and Customer Research surveyed nearly 28,000 people in 11 countries about the best countries in which to live
- Countries surveyed were: the U.S., Canada, Germany, U.K., France, Spain, Italy, Japan, Australia, Brazil, and India
- A third of global respondents (34%) picked Australia as a top choice (excluding their home country), followed by Canada (27%) and the U.S. (24%)
- U.S. residents ranked English-speaking countries as their top picks. The U.S. was their first choice (81%), followed by Canada (38%), Australia (35%), and the U.K. (20%)

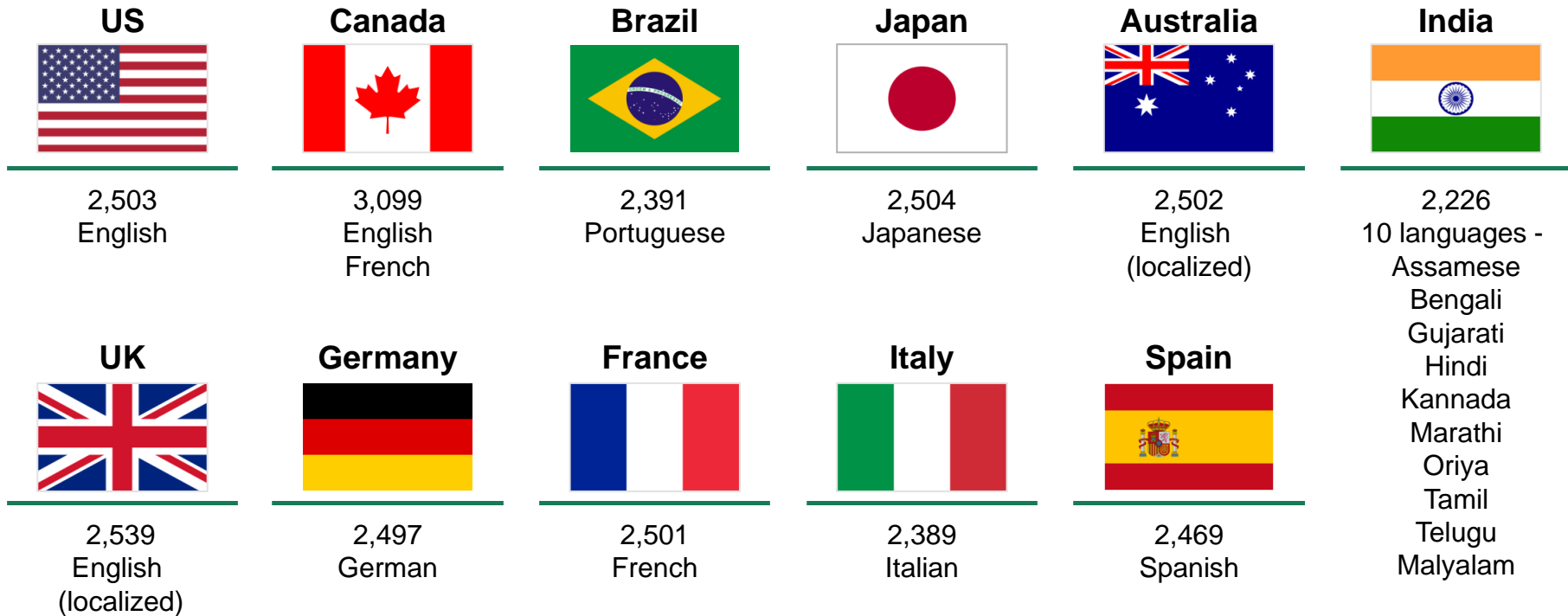
- Nonresidents cited economic opportunity/material well-being, quality education, and cost of living as the top reasons for wanting to live in the U.S.
- Political freedom, economic opportunity/material well-being, tolerance for many cultures and/or religions, quality education, and quality healthcare were the top reasons cited by residents
- Interestingly, Americans placed a somewhat lower emphasis on economic opportunity (32% versus 53% for nonresidents), cost of living (11% versus 26%), and quality education (26% versus 11%)
- Americans placed a much higher emphasis on political freedom (51% versus 13% for nonresidents), tolerance for many cultures and/or religions (30% versus 15%), and quality healthcare (20% versus 11%)

- 32% of respondents in those rapidly developing economies ranked the U.S. a top 3 place to live, followed by Australia (22%) and Canada (20%)

- U.S. Millennials (ages 16-34 in 2011) ranked EU countries such as the U.K., Italy and France, as well as Japan, higher as a best place to live than older generations
- Not surprisingly, U.S. Baby Boomers and the generation above (so-called "Silents") felt even more strongly that the U.S. is their favorite country to live in

BCG surveyed nearly 28,000 consumers in 11 countries

Local languages were used in the research – part of a global consumer sentiment survey

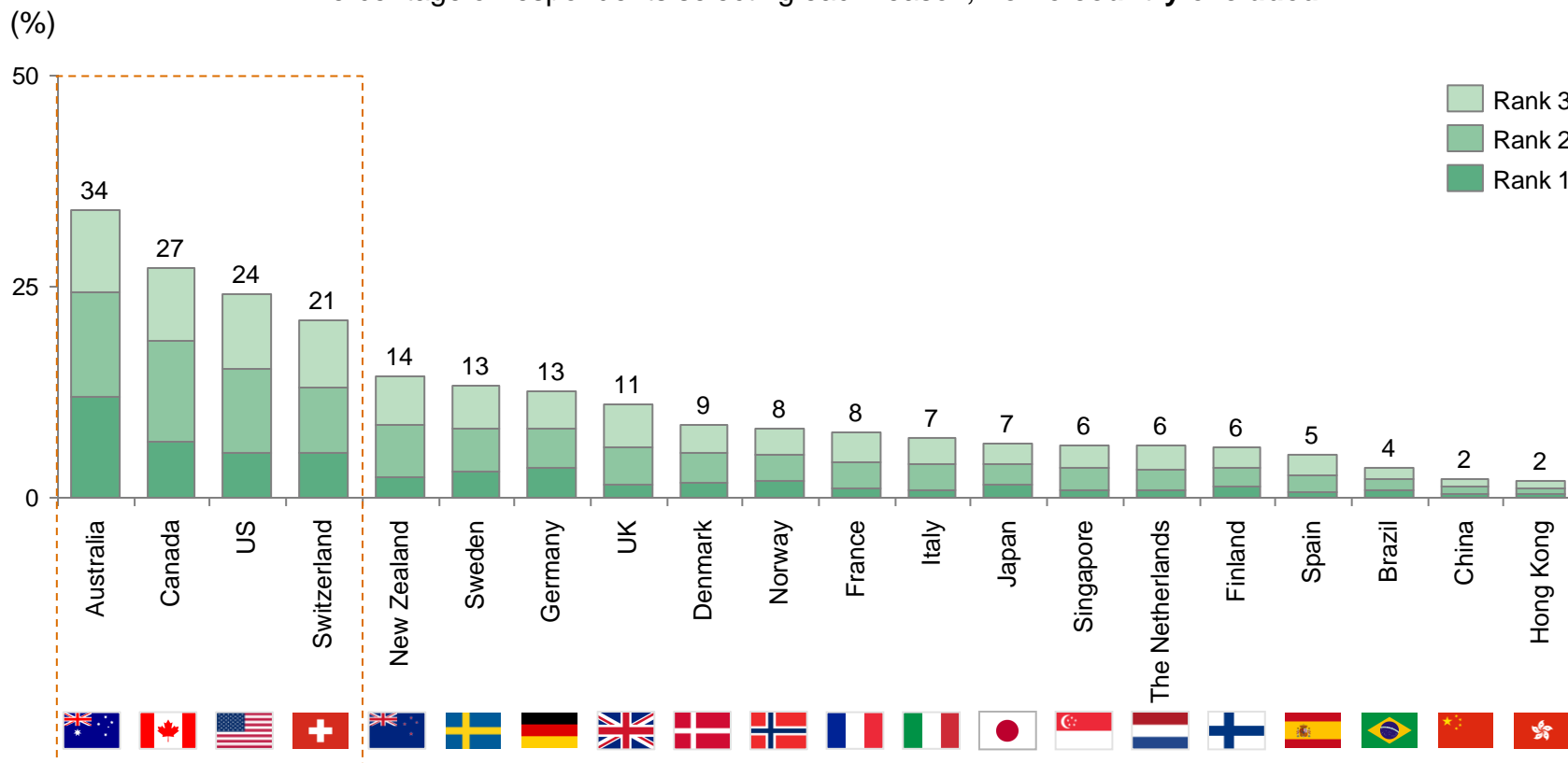


A total of 27,620 consumers spanned both developed and developing economies

Nonresidents ranked the U.S. as a top place to live, behind Australia and Canada

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."

Percentage of respondents selecting each reason, **home country excluded**



Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

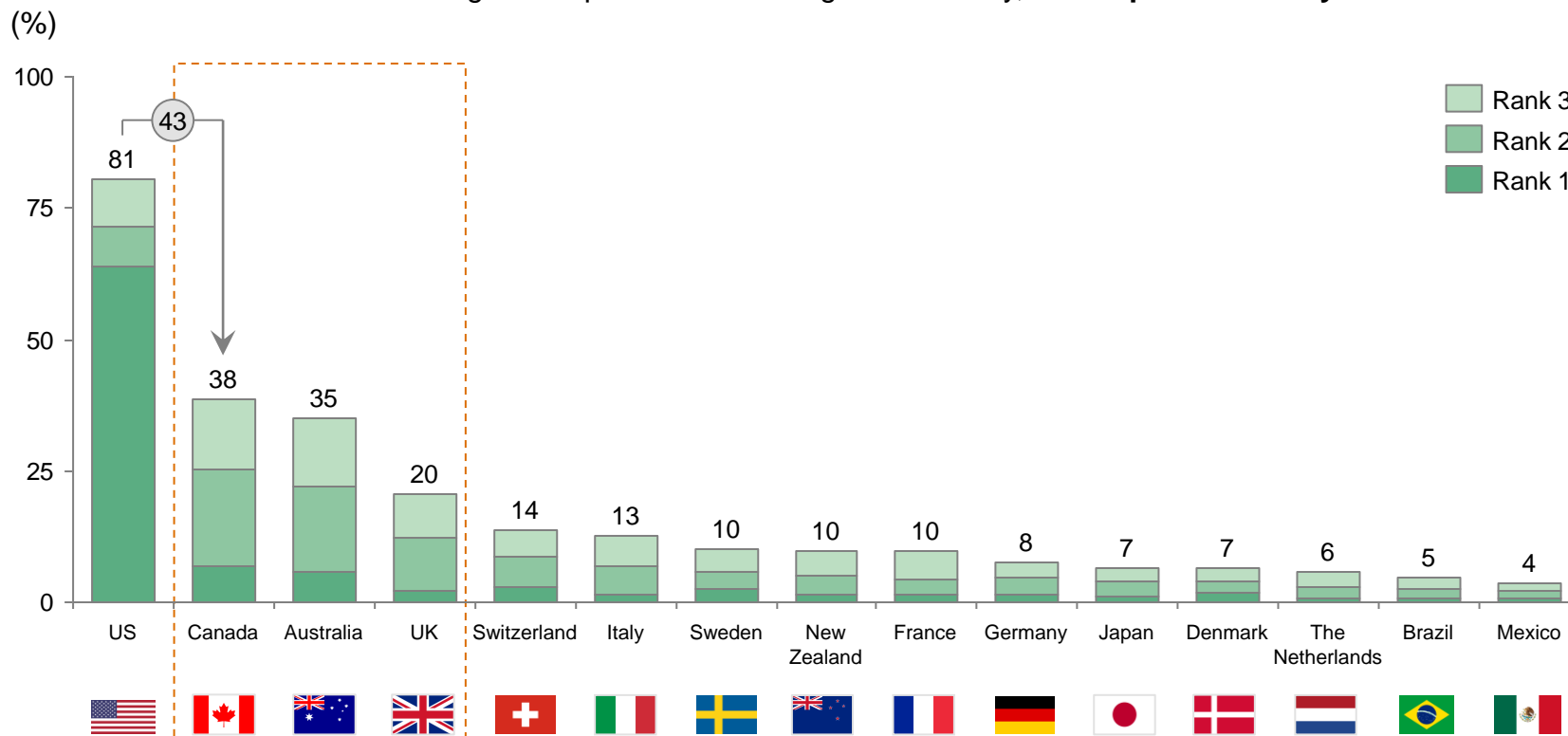
Note: Responses from home country excluded; respondents normalized to 2,500 per country

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Americans selected English-speaking countries as their favorite places to live and the U.S. as their #1 choice by far

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."

Percentage of respondents selecting each country, **US respondents only**



Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

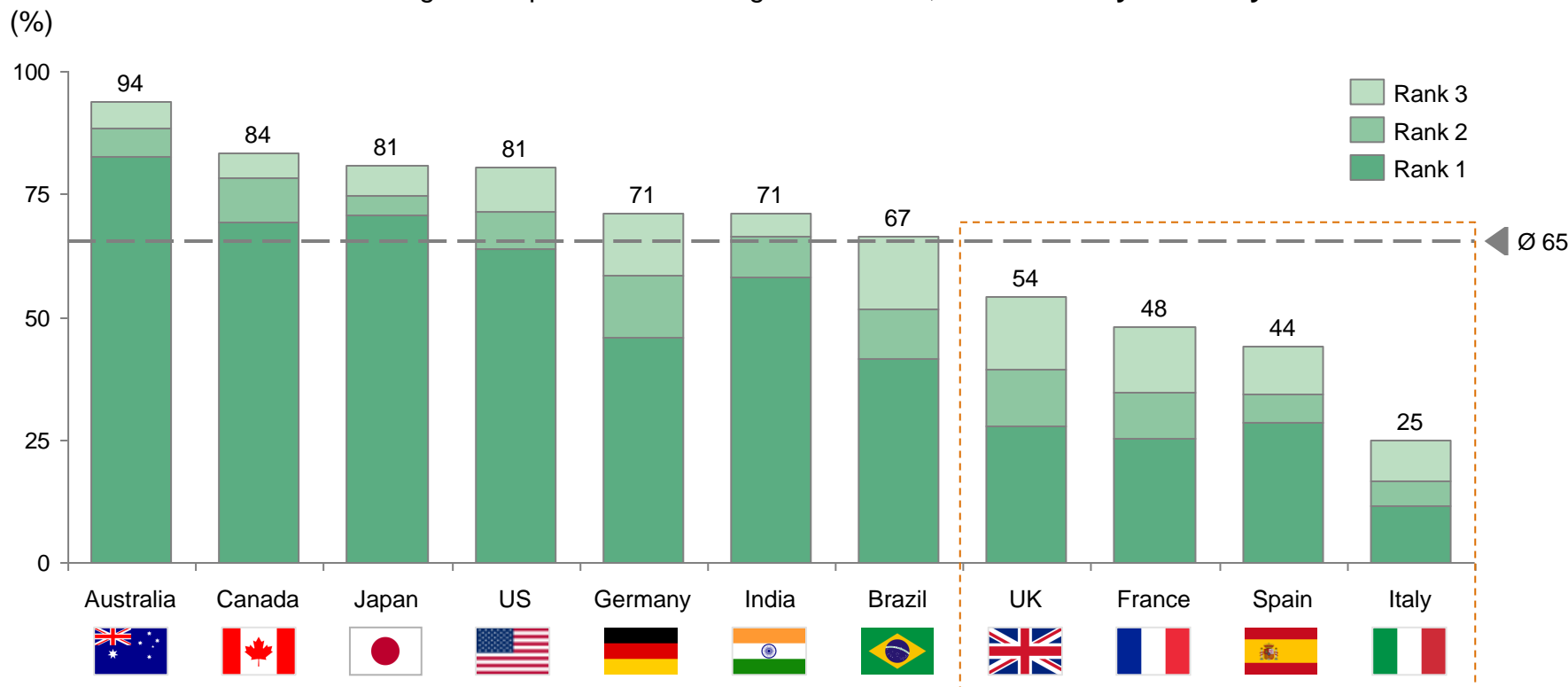
Note: US was surveyed in English and is representative of acculturated Hispanic population in US, but not the solely Spanish speaking population in the US

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment, 2013

Of all the respondents, EU residents ranked their home countries on the lower end, with the exception of Germany

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."

Percentage of respondents selecting each reason, **home country rank only**














Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Climate, healthcare, education and economic opportunity were key reasons overall when ranking countries #1

When country is ranked number 1






Reasons selected when countries ranked number 1 (%)												
Reasons	Climate	43	12	16	6	7	22	58	33	75	62	31
	Quality of natural environment	42	36	9	10	16	23	37	17	17	23	16
	Economic opportunity/material wellbeing	32	22	41	45	16	8	6	14	4	20	15
	Work/life balance	30	17	21	20	17	22	17	16	18	15	14
	Accessible healthcare	20	41	10	29	50	45	26	40	29	5	14
	Quality education	17	29	29	33	33	27	13	18	10	5	29
	Strong rule of law/public safety	17	19	19	26	20	11	5	44	6	1	0
	Quality healthcare	14	26	16	35	27	39	14	21	27	1	10
	Political freedom	13	14	35	17	20	22	12	11	8	26	7
	Cost of living	13	12	17	13	9	7	10	6	21	26	33
	Sense of community/belonging	11	12	16	6	18	11	24	8	14	7	33
	Lower governmental, military and corporate corruption	10	9	8	15	12	5	3	6	1	0	11
	Tolerance for many cultures or religions	10	21	24	8	19	14	12	13	12	43	36
	Life expectancy	10	7	9	10	8	17	22	10	23	18	23
	Gender equality	5	8	9	6	6	6	3	3	10	12	2
	Other	2	2	5	4	6	4	12	11	8	9	8

Survey question: "Please indicate up to the top 3 reasons why you selected _____ as the best country to live in. Select up to 3."

Note: China didn't see the question







Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment survey June, 2013

Reasons cited by respondents overall for ranking these countries as their #1 place to live, in order of importance (I)

Australia	Canada	US	Germany	UK
				
Climate	Accessible healthcare	Economic opportunity/material well-being	Economic opportunity/material well-being	Accessible healthcare
Natural environment	Natural environment	Political freedom	Quality healthcare	Quality education
Economic opportunity/material well-being	Quality education	Quality education	Quality education	Quality healthcare
Work/life balance	Quality healthcare	Tolerance for many cultures and/or religions	Accessible healthcare	
			Strong rule of law/public safety	

Survey question: "Please indicate up to the top 3 reasons why you selected _____ as the best country to live in. Select up to 3."
 Note: This shows the top reasons cited by respondents who chose these countries as their top country to live in, across all of the 11 countries
 Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Reasons cited by respondents overall for ranking these countries as their #1 place to live, in order of importance (II)

France	Italy	Japan	Spain	Brazil	India
					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible healthcare Quality healthcare Quality education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Natural environment Accessible healthcare Sense of community/ of belonging Life expectancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong rule of law/public safety Accessible healthcare Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Accessible healthcare Quality healthcare Life expectancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic opportunity/ material well-being Climate Political Freedom Cost of living Tolerance for many cultures and/or religions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerance for many cultures and/or religions Sense of community/ of belonging Cost of living Climate Quality education

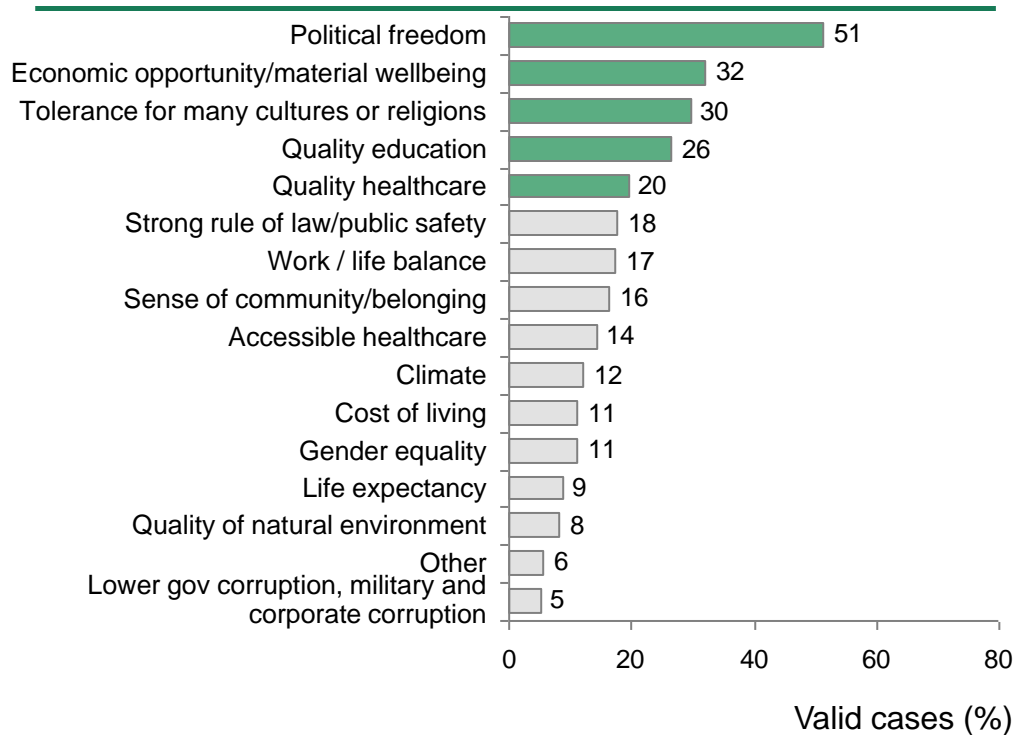
Survey question: "Please indicate up to the top 3 reasons why you selected _____ as the best country to live in. Select up to 3."
 Note: All respondents ranking corresponding country number 1 place to live
 Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Americans placed a lower emphasis on economic opportunity, cost of living, and education than nonresidents

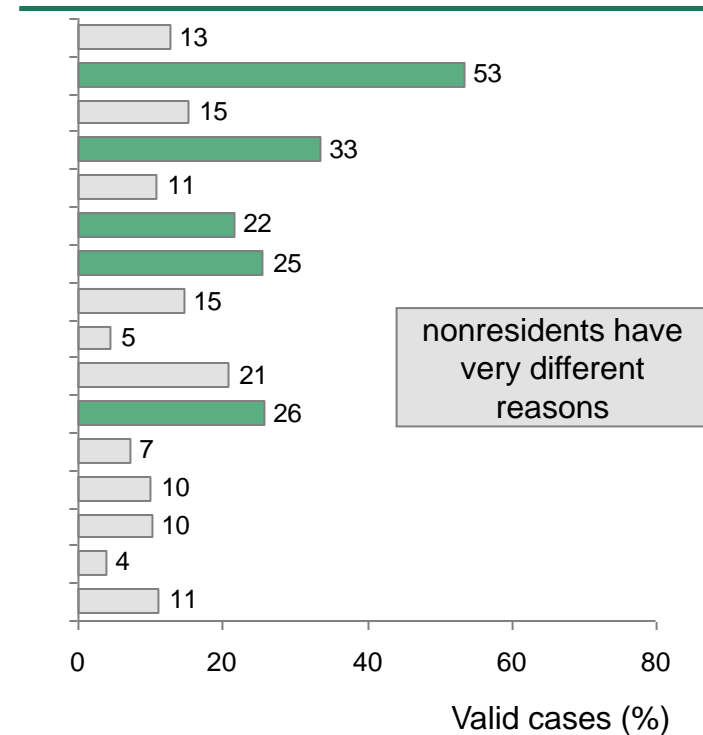
"Please indicate up to the top 3 reasons why you selected _____ as the best country to live in. Select up to 3."

Percentage of respondents who ranked U.S. number 1 selecting each reason

U.S. respondents



Non-resident respondents (excluding U.S.)



nonresidents have very different reasons

Survey question: "Please indicate up to the top 3 reasons why you selected _____ as the best country to live in. Select up to 3."

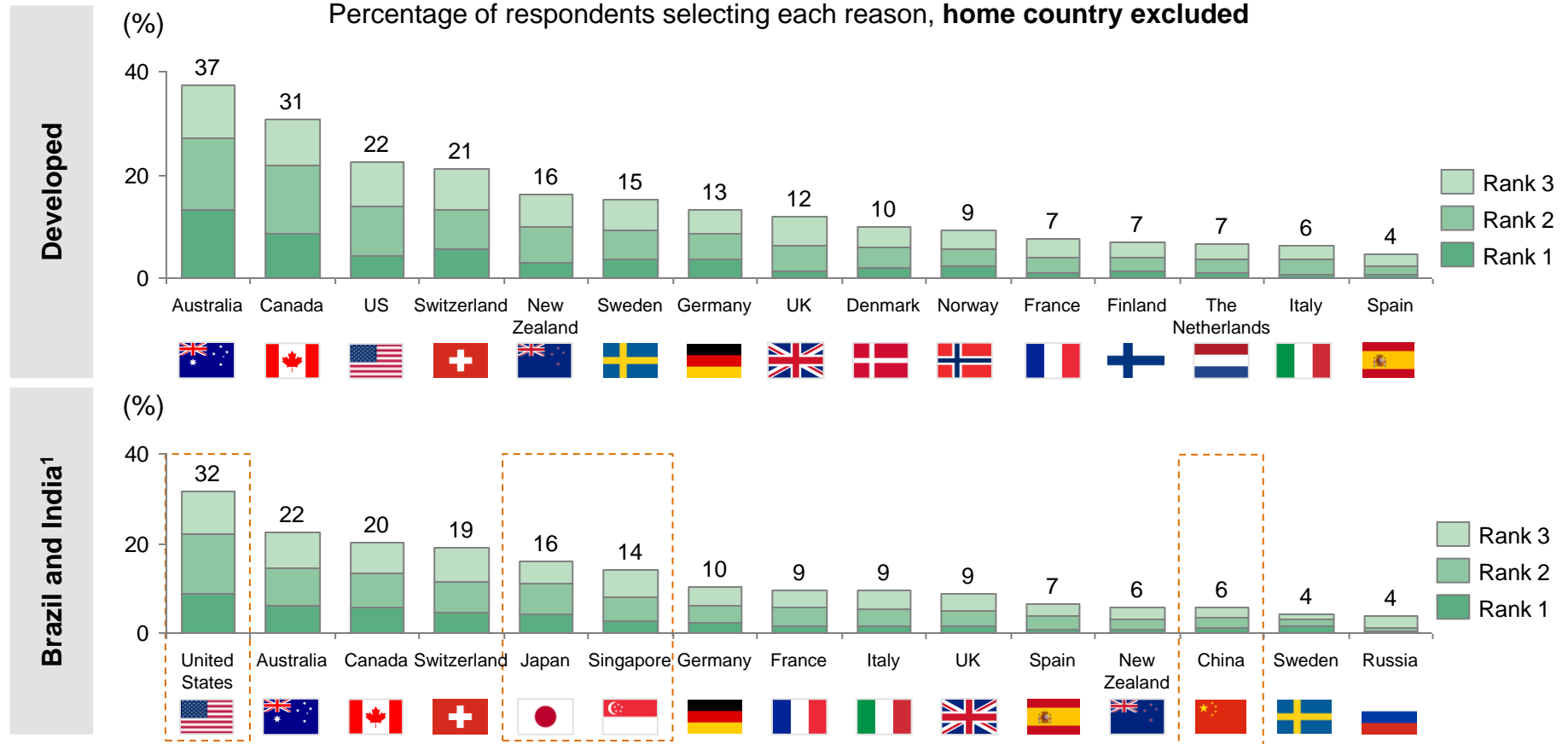
Note: Normalized to 2,500 respondents per country

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

The U.S. was the most popular place to live among respondents in the RDEs¹ of Brazil and India

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."

Percentage of respondents selecting each reason, **home country excluded**



1. RDE (rapidly developing economies) respondents include India and Brazil

Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

Note: Responses from home country excluded; respondents normalized to 2,500 per country

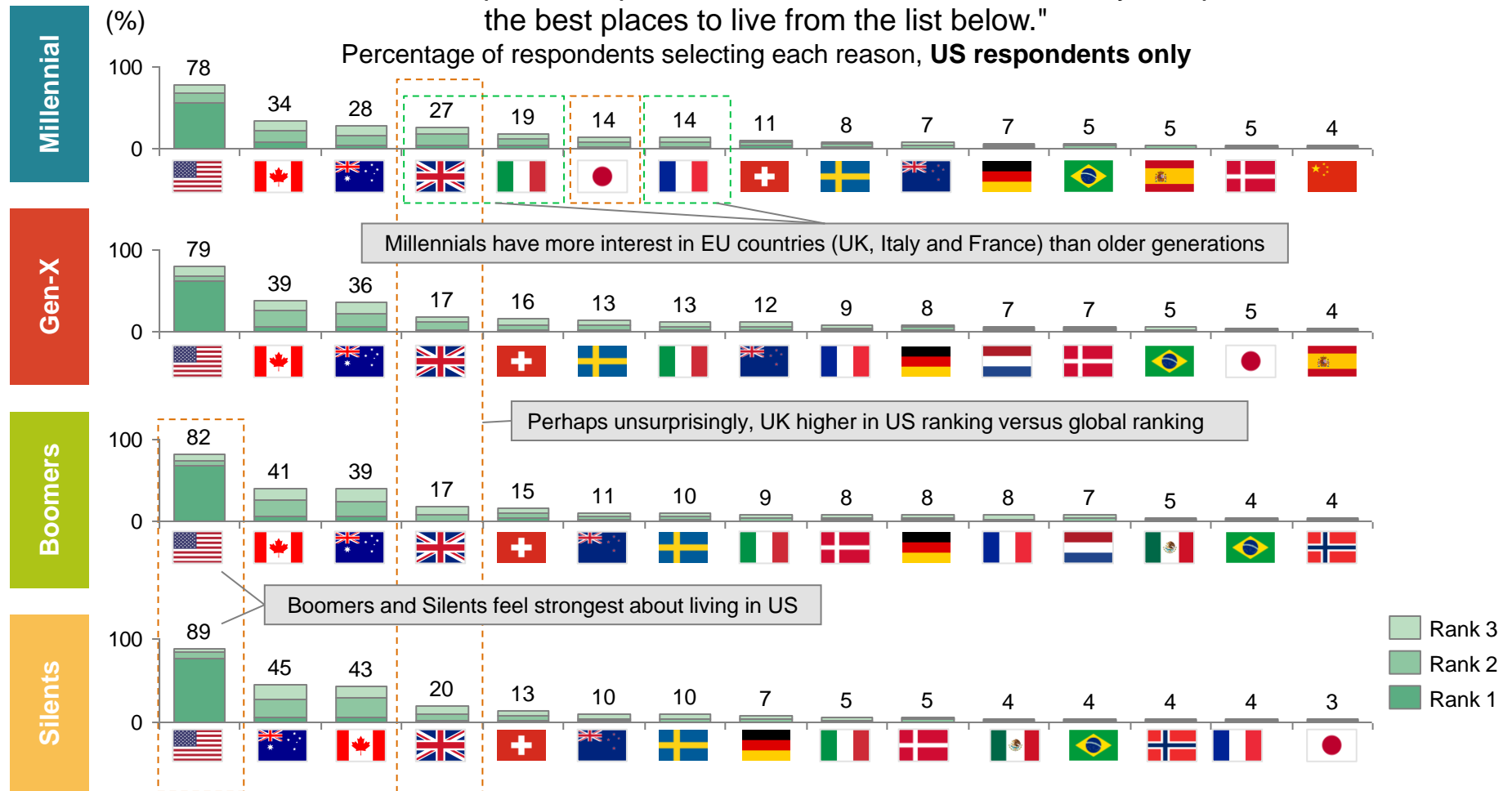
Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

U.S. Millennials showed a much stronger interest in living in the U.K., Italy, France, and Japan than their elders

Generations

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."

Percentage of respondents selecting each reason, **US respondents only**



Millennials have more interest in EU countries (UK, Italy and France) than older generations

Perhaps unsurprisingly, UK higher in US ranking versus global ranking

Boomers and Silents feel strongest about living in US

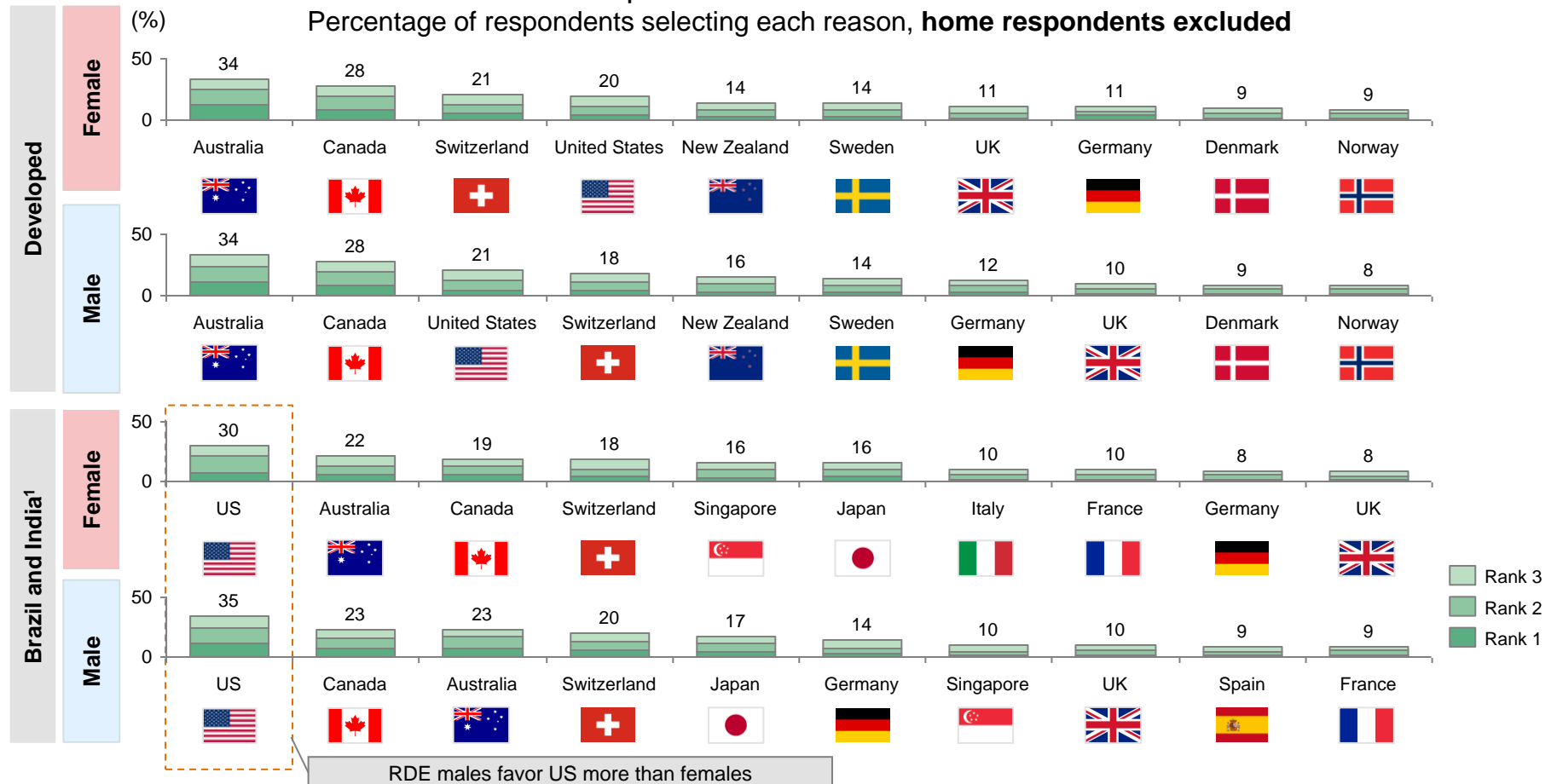
Rank 3
Rank 2
Rank 1

Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Little variance seen in rankings among men and women in developed countries; more among RDE¹ respondents

"Please indicate up to the top 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the best places to live from the list below."



1. RDE (rapidly developing economies) respondents include India and Brazil

Question: "Please indicate up to the 3 countries in the world that are, in your opinion, the "best places to live" from the list below. Please place a "1" next to the country that is best to live in, a "2" next to the country that is second best to live in, and a "3" next to the country that is third best to live in."

Note: Responses from home country excluded; respondents normalized to 2,500 per country

Source: BCG Consumer Sentiment Survey, 2013

Summary of key findings from the global analysis (I)

	Key themes	Supporting detail
Global rank	Australia, Canada, U.S. and Switzerland are ranked as top countries to live in by respondents in 11 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34% of global respondents ranked Australia as a top 3 country to live in (excluding their home country), 27% ranked Canada in the top 3, 24% ranked U.S. in the top 3, and 21% ranked Switzerland in the top 3, driven by German residents Home countries excluded in overall ranking
	EU countries rank in the middle of the Top 20, and Asian countries toward the end of the Top 20, when excluding home country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rankings 6-12 are European countries, namely Sweden, Germany, UK, Denmark, Norway, France and Italy Japan at 7% of respondents enters Top 20 at 13, Singapore at 14 with 6% of respondents, China at 19 with 2% of respondents, and Hong Kong at 20 with 2% of respondents Thailand, Austria and Portugal, Ireland and Costa Rica lead top write-ins, but none make Top 20 Home countries excluded
	Residents of UK and Italy rank other countries as better places than UK and Italy, respectively; EU 5 except Germany below mean for ranking home country as top place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 94% of Australian respondents ranked Australia as a top 3 place to live, followed by Canada, U.S. and Japan at 81-84% ranking their home country as a top 3 place to live, followed by Germany, India and Brazil, all above the 65% mean 53% of UK respondents ranked UK as a top 3 place to live, 48% of France respondents ranked France as a top place to live, 44% of Spain respondents ranked Spain as top place to live, and 25% of Italy respondents ranked Italy as a top place to live 54% of UK residents ranked Australia as a top 3 place to live Italy residents ranked Italy behind Australia and Switzerland as a top place to live
	Residents in the rapidly developing economies of Brazil and India rank the U.S. a top country to live in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32% ranked U.S. a top 3 place to live, 22% ranked Australia as a top 3 place to live, and 20% ranked Canada as a top place to live Residents of rapidly developing economies of Brazil and India ranked Japan (16% respondents ranked Japan as top 3 place to live), Singapore and China in their Top 15 Home countries excluded
	Little variance in the rankings of men and women from 9 developed economies. More variance in ranks 5-10 of the Top 10 from Brazil and India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variance reported among U.S. Millennials (ages 16-34 in 2011), but little variance in non-Millennial generations (i.e., Gen X, Boomers and Silents) U.S. Millennials ranked EU countries such as UK, Italy and France higher than older generations; also ranked Japan materially higher than older generations, as do Australian Millennials Not surprisingly, U.S. Boomers and Silents felt even more strongly that U.S. is a top place to live
	Younger generations in Australia and Germany are showing more interest in U.S. than older generations; interestingly, younger U.S. generations express greater interest in EU countries than older U.S. generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of Australians aged 18-34 and 18% aged 35-49 ranked U.S. as their top 3 places to live 35-49 year old Australians ran Switzerland higher than other generations Australian Boomers and Silents had much higher concentration in Top 3 countries Canadian Millennials had more interest in EU countries, like U.S. Millennials 25% of Germans aged 18-34 ranked the U.S. a top 3 place to live, highest of the German generations

Summary of key findings from the global analysis (II)

	Key themes	Supporting detail
Rationale	Of the 11-country respondents that rank Australia, Canada, U.S. and Switzerland as a top 3 place to live, reasons for ranking differ by country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: Climate, accessible healthcare, quality of natural environment, political freedom, quality healthcare and work-life balance were key reasons cited for ranking Australia a top place to live • Canada: Accessible healthcare, quality healthcare, quality education, natural environment, and tolerance for many cultures or religions were key reasons cited for ranking Canada a top place to live • U.S.: By comparison, political freedom, relative economic opportunity/material well-being, tolerance for many cultures or religions, quality education, and quality healthcare were key reasons for ranking U.S. as a top place to live • Switzerland: relative economic opportunity/material well-being, natural environment, strong rule of law, work/life balance, and quality education were key reasons for ranking Switzerland as a top place to live
	Nonresidents add economic opportunity, work-life balance, and strong rule of law/public safety to residents' key reasons for Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% of nonresidents ranked economic opportunity/material wellbeing as a top 3 reason for ranking Australia a top place to live, versus Australians at 17% • 18% of nonresidents ranked strong rule of law/public safety as a top 3 reason for ranking Australia a top place to live, versus Australians at 15%
	Quality of natural environment, strong rule of law/public safety, economic opportunity, and work/life balance rank higher for nonresidents than Canadian residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27% of nonresidents ranked work-life balance as a top 5 reason for ranking Canada a top place to live versus 10% of Canadian residents, and 50% ranked quality of natural environment as top reason versus Canadians at 26% • 37% of nonresidents ranked economic opportunity as a top 3 reason for ranking Canada a top place to live versus 12% of Canadian respondents, and 22% of nonresidents listed strong rule of law/public safety as a top 5 reason versus 17% of Canadian residents
	Resident reasons for U.S. as top country to live vary from nonresidents, except relative economic opportunity and availability of quality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26% of nonresidents ranked cost of living, 25% ranked work/life balance, and 22% ranked strong rule of law/public safety versus 11%, 17%, and 18% of Americans, respectively • 53% of nonresidents ranked economic opportunity/material well-being as a top 3 reason for ranking U.S. a top place to live versus 32% of American residents

This research is part of BCG's global Consumer Sentiment series

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Selected Publications

[A Change of Pace in Chinese Consumer Sentiment](#)

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